

SENATE STANDING COMMITTEE ON LEGAL AND CONSTITUTIONAL AFFAIRS
ATTORNEY-GENERAL'S DEPARTMENT

Group 2

Question No. 14

Senator Carr asked the following question at the hearing on 24 February 2014:

Senator KIM CARR: Mr Wilkins, you indicated earlier that the budget allocation for the royal commission into the home insulation scheme was \$20 million. In MYEFO, it was a figure of \$12.2 million. Has the budget blown out by \$8 million already?

Ms Glanville: The \$20 million includes the allocations for Commonwealth representation and support for witnesses before the commission.

Senator KIM CARR: But in MYEFO it was \$12.2 million—is that true?

Ms Glanville: That is the monetary amount that has been allocated to the commission itself. But in addition to that amount, to reach the \$20 million, there are costs for Commonwealth representation and for witnesses as well.

Senator KIM CARR: Did you say a monthly amount?

Ms Glanville: No. The overall cost of the commission that has been allocated to date is \$20 million. The figure you are referring to, from the additional estimates book, is the amount the royal commission itself has; the costs related to representation by the Commonwealth; and also the costs that go to witnesses or others, including the attendance at the commission of the families of the deceased. That brings the total figure up to \$20 million.

Senator KIM CARR: Why wasn't that extra \$8 million allocated in the MYEFO statement?

Ms Glanville: I might have to take that on notice or ask our financial—

Senator Brandis: It may be that that is a question for the Department of Finance. The accounting practices that are adopted by the central agencies in expressing various amounts in the MYEFO and in the additional estimates statements are no doubt the reason why a distinction was made, as Ms Glanville has tried to explain to you, between the \$12.5 million, which is the correct figure that was specified to be the cost of the royal commission—that is, the operation of the royal commission, as it were—and the additional figure, which is the cost of legal representation and so on, which was evidently accounted for elsewhere.

The answer to the honourable senator's question is as follows:

Total funding to establish the Royal Commission into the Home Insulation Program is \$20 million. The make-up of this funding is disclosed in Note 2 to the table on page 33 of the 2013-14 Portfolio Additional Estimates Statements for the Attorney-General's portfolio as follows:

“Total funding of \$19.0m is being provided to the Department for the Royal Commission into the Home Insulation Programme. This funding comprises \$12.249m for the Commission's operating expenses, \$0.100m in capital funding for the Commission, \$2.422m for legal financial assistance and expenses for witnesses to the Commission (programme 1.3) and \$4.225m to administer the financial assistance programme and to protect the Commonwealth's interests (programme 1.1).”

In addition, \$1.000 million has been provided to the Department of Finance for witness expenses of current and former ministers.